

News from Assemblymember ***Joe Coto***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 4, 2009

Contact: Manny Hernandez
Phone: 916-319-2023

Help for Unemployed People Legislative Committee Approves AB 23 X3 (Coto)

Sacramento - AB 23 of the 3rd Extraordinary Session, authored by Assemblymember Joe Coto (D-San Jose), adopts necessary changes to California law to qualify the state for two major pieces of federal economic stimulus funding.

The bill authorizes 20 weeks of additional federal UI benefits for persons who have exhausted their UI benefits. The bill also allows job earnings made in the last three months of employment to qualify for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. The bill received a bipartisan approval this morning by the Assembly Insurance Committee, on a vote of 8-2 with Assemblymember Sam Blakeslee's (San Luis Obispo – R) support. It is next expected to be heard by the Assembly Appropriations Committee next week.

Assemblymember Coto said, "I want to thank President Obama for helping states to fund unemployment benefits. In California, we intend to use his economic stimulus funds. Today, I am pleased to report that a state legislative committee has approved state legislation to help an estimated 324,000 people who need unemployment compensation to meet living expenses." He also noted, "At a time when 1.9 million people are unemployed in our state and we experience a 10% unemployment rate, it is vital that we obtain federal dollars. AB 23 X3 will bring a vital **\$2.4 billion** to California for unemployment benefits."

The legislation authorizes 20 weeks of additional UI benefits to individuals who have exhausted their UI benefits. These extended benefits are paid 100% by the federal government. If all 259,903 people who are certified for federal emergency UI benefits become eligible for the new extended benefits for the maximum 20 weeks at the current average weekly benefit of \$305 per week, then the UI benefits can total **\$1.6 billion**. The bill also allows recent earnings to be counted toward UI eligibility and will result in California receiving **\$839 million** from the federal government to pay UI benefits to 64,500 people.

#